

also made between Samoa and Mokogai, Niue and Makogai, and New Zealand and Makogai, carrying lepers from these territories, thus performing a service which, without the Government vessel, would have been an extremely difficult one to carry out.

The "Hinemoa" was also utilized on several occasions to perform towing service for Government Departments. In spite of her age and over fifty years Government service, she proved a useful and reliable vessel, and more than justified the Department's action in putting her again into commission for island purposes.

EXTENSION OF SERVICE.

Although the entry of the "Hinemoa" into the service satisfactorily catered for the Niue Island trade, there were, and had been for some years, pressing demands for improved shipping facilities between the islands and New Zealand.

Firstly, in 1920, the Government appointed a Commission to inquire into the conditions of trade between New Zealand and the Pacific islands, and to report upon the best means of promoting and encouraging an increase of trade between New Zealand and these territories. The Commission comprised Messrs. George (now Sir George) Elliot (Chairman), William Richard Pearson and Thomas Wilson (members), and the following is an extract from their report:—

"Shipping must naturally play a most important part in the extension of the trade of the islands, and if the New Zealand and British trade generally is to be fostered the subject must have the serious attention of the Government. . . . At present one ship, the 'Navua,' runs a four-weekly service between Samoa and Auckland. . . . On its return trip comparatively little cargo is taken from Samoa, as every inch of space is required for green bananas from Suva (Fiji). Although Samoa grows many varieties of fruit, especially bananas, there is no chance at present of a fruit trade being developed. The remedy is obvious: either the New Zealand Government should make equitable arrangements for a direct Samoan service, or purchase suitable ships themselves. There seemed to be the same shipping troubles in nearly every island we visited, and unless the matter is satisfactorily dealt with it is utterly impossible to look for trade development, for without a satisfactory service planters, Native or European, become disheartened and consequently trade languishes. We are aware that the carrying-out of this recommendation would affect private enterprise, which is a matter to be deplored, but the consequences are so vital that we are constrained to make it.

"*Niue*.—A better schooner service should be obtained. If this is impossible, or if the subsidy demanded is too great, your Government should itself purchase a suitable auxiliary schooner and run it."

Secondly, the Auckland Chamber of Commerce were also urging the Government to improve the shipping facilities with the islands, and the following is an extract from a letter from that Chamber, dated the 5th October, 1921, addressed to the Hon. the Minister:—

"Following up the conference with you at the chamber, and as the outcome of various meetings, the council passed the following resolution, which I was instructed to remit to you, in the full assurance that it will receive favourable consideration by you, and the council trusts be submitted to Cabinet for its consideration.

"The resolution unanimously adopted is as follows:—

"'That the attention of the council of this Chamber having been drawn to the fact that there is reason to anticipate the loss to New Zealand of the major portion (if not all) of the trade which it has hitherto developed with the island groups of Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa, through the recently arranged steamship service between Sydney and Fiji, subsidized by the Government of Fiji, deems the matter of urgent importance, and suggests the advisability of the Government taking steps immediately to make such counter-efforts, either by subsidized or other improved steamship service, as may assist in retaining this trade, which has been built up and fostered by the New Zealand traders from the days of the old trading cutters and schooners.'

"I shall be glad to hear from you at your convenience if the Government proposes to give this matter its attention, and, if desired, this Chamber will do its best to assist in any way that you may indicate for the extension and improvement of the island trade."

Thirdly, the South Island Chamber of Commerce and other associated bodies were also continually urging the Government to arrange for a direct steamer service from the islands to southern ports.

Fourthly, there was an increasing demand from Samoa for an outlet for the fruit trade, which up to that time it had been impossible to develop, on account of lack of shipping. The only connection with Samoa was by the monthly steamer of the Union Steamship Co., and, as stated in the previously quoted extract from the report of the Commission, any fruit cargoes that may have been available in Samoa were excluded on account of the fruit from Suva, Fiji. Further than this, without insulated stowage it was impossible for fruit to be carried from Samoa via Fiji to New Zealand, and the Union Steamship Co.'s vessels were not so fitted.

Although, as previously stated, every endeavour was made from time to time to induce private enterprise to cater for the trade, and public tenders for a satisfactory service were invited, no improvement was effected. The Government therefore determined to replace the "Hinemoa," which, on account of her build, was unsuitable for fruit-carrying, with a modern vessel fitted with insulated holds for the purpose of carrying on these various services.

M.V. "Maui Pomare."

The new vessel was to provide a direct service between Samoa and Niue Island and New Zealand ports, and was to be fitted with refrigerated space for the carriage of perishable fruit cargoes and to have a limited amount of accommodation for passengers. In addition, it was proposed that the vessel should provide certain services from Samoa into the Northern Cook and Union groups at intervals throughout the year. A motor-ship was specially determined upon, particularly because of the extensive radius of the vessel's itinerary during her periodical visits from Apia into the